

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

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INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

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RSR-01 /176 W

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6532

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

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INFO AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY KABUL

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TAGS: PFOR, IN, PK, BG

SUBJ: INITIAL INDIAN REACTIONS TO INDO-PAKISTAN-BANGALEES
AGREEMENT

REF: NEW DELHI 10070

SUMMARY: INDIAN REACTION TO THE INDO-PAKISTANI-BENGALIEE
AGREEMENT SIGNED AUGUST 28 HAS BEEN ONE OF RELIEF AND SATIS-
FACTION, BUT NOT EXCITEMENT. SOME FEEL INDIA GOT LITTLE IN
EXCHANGE FOR FREEING THE PRISONERS. BHUTTO'S STATEMENT IN AN
INTERVIEW THAT RECOGNITION WOULD NOT COME SOON WAS WIDELY
REPORTED. THE VAGUENESS OF TERMS USED IN THE AGREEMENT IS
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BEGINNING TO RESULT IN VARYING INTERPRETATIONS OF KEY PROVISIONS, SUCH AS THE "SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER" OF BIHARIS TO BE RETURNED TO PAKISTAN. END SUMMARY

1. THE IMMEDIATE SENSE OF RELIEF AND SATISFACTION (BUT NOT EXCITEMENT) WHICH GREETED PUBLICATION OF THE AGREEMENT HERE HAS NATURALLY GIVEN WAY TO SOME SECOND THOUGHTS. THE ONLY NEGATIVE INITIAL REACTION WAS THAT OF THE MILITANT NATIONALIST JANA SANGH PARTY, WHOSE LEADER TERMED IT A "PIECE-MEAL SOLUTION" WHICH WOULD NOT BRING PEACE TO THE AREA, BUT PRIVATE CITIZENS ALSO CRITICIZED IT AS ONE-SIDED. NOW THE PRESS IS CARRYING A NUMBER OF ANALYSES OF THE PROSPECTS FOR EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION, WHICH REFLECT CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM.

2. INDIAN NEGOTIATOR P.N. HAKSAR WAS INTERVIEWED ON ALL-INDIA RADIO AUGUST 30 AND MADE THE POINT THAT REPATRIATION OF PAKISTANIS FROM BANGLADESH AND THE WAR CRIMES TRIALS WERE COMPLETELY SEPARATE ISSUES, THE FIRST HUMANITARIAN AND THE SECOND LEGAL. HE STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF AN EARLY MOVEMENT OF PRISONERS AND REFUGEES. ON THIS POINT, THE PRESS HAS ALREADY CARRIED DETAILED STORIES ABOUT THE PLANNED TRANSFER OF PAKISTANI PRISONERS AT WAGAH, HUSSAINIWALA, FAZILKA, AND GADRAFGAD AFTER THEIR MOVEMENT FROM CAMPS BY TRAIN.

3. VETERAN PAKISTAN-WATCHER DILIP MUKERJEE, WRITING IN THE TIMES OF INDIA, CALLED THE AGREEMENT "A VOTE FOR COMMON SENSE" AND BELITTLED JANA SANGH CRITICISM. HE POINTED OUT THAT THE AGREEMENT'S VAGUENESS AS TO THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE INVOLVED IN EXCHANGES WAS A CONSEQUENCE OF IMPRECISE SURVEYS OF THE REFUGEES WAITING TO BE REPATRIATED. IN HIS VIEW RECOGNITION OF BANGLADESH AND ITS ADMISSION TO THE UN ARE NOT FAR OFF. THIS CONTRASTED WITH PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO'S STATEMENT IN AN INTERVIEW IN THE GUARDIAN OF LONDON THAT RECOGNITION WOULD NOT COME UNTIL THE ISSUE OF "NON-BANGLAHEES" IN THAT COUNTRY HAD BEEN SETTLED.

4. STATEMENTS BY THE WHITE HOUSE AND DEPUTY SECRETARY RUSH PRAISING THE AGREEMENT WERE WELL REPORTED IN THE PRESS.

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